

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 1904.

WHO'S WHO IN WASHINGTON



Mrs. John Hay, Wife of
Secretary of State
Leading Lady of the Cabinet

Social Precedence as Established by State and Countess Cassini's Campaign of Conquest in the Diplomatic Corps.

FOR the first time in the history of this Government a young New York matron in the early twenties stands next to the President's wife as virtually second lady of the land.

Mrs. Roosevelt, mistress of the White House, is first. Mrs. Payne Whitney, eldest daughter of the Secretary of State, is, in the event of absence or illness of her mother, the ranking second lady of the land. And after her comes third in line the Secretary's youngest daughter, another charming young matron, Mrs. James Wadsworth, Jr.

By this ruling of official etiquette both daughters of the Secretary of State outrank Miss Alice Roosevelt, as the latter, being unmarried, holds in reality no official position other than that given by courtesy to unmarried daughters of Cabinet officers.

In the Diplomatic Corps.

In the Diplomatic Corps the ranking lady is Countess Marguerite de Cassini, daughter of the dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Very characteristically, after having won her battle, the Countess yields her point on state occasions because she is but three years out of her teens and unmarried, and waives her right in favor of Madame Aspiroz, wife of the Ambassador ranking next in line to the dean of the corps.

But Count Cassini is dean of the corps, and all Ambassadors must call on him at the outset of each season. The Count invariably receives with his young daughter beside him. So every matron in the Ambassadorial set must once a year make formal call upon this girl Countess.

The Cabinet girls are entitled to stand in line at any afternoon reception which the wife of the President may care to hold. That is any formal one.

But Mrs. Payne Whitney, and, in her absence, Mrs. James Wadsworth, Jr., must be asked to stand next to the first lady of the land at state receptions and lead the company on the arm of the President at the State Cabinet dinners.

The Cabinet Girls.

Miss Wilson, as daughter of the widower who holds the portfolio of Secretary of Agriculture, represents her father by standing in line in accordance with the creation of the office held by her father. Until the present winter she has therefore always stood at the end of the line. Now that there has been a new Cabinet portfolio added, Mrs. Cortelyou, as wife of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, occupies the last place in the line of the Cabinet women at state receptions.

But, though she stands one ahead of Mrs. Cortelyou in the line, Miss Wilson can never hope for the honor of standing second lady in the land since, in order for that to come to pass, every other Cabinet woman who now outranks her would either have to be incapacitated by illness or be absent from the city.

This would be rendered an even further remote contingency by the fact that in the event of the illness or absence of Mrs. Hitchcock the latter would be represented by one of her two daughters, and Miss Knox would come in as representative for her mother.



Mrs. Theodore
Roosevelt, First
Lady in the Land

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Mrs.
Payne
Whitney



Miss Alice
Roosevelt

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Mrs. James Wadsworth Jr.
Second Daughter of Secretary of State

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The story of how Countess Cassini won her present position outranking every Ambassador's wife in the corps reads like a romance.

Of course when she had made her formal bow to society she was included in the list of invited guests to all White House functions as any other member of an Ambassador's family.

The late Lord Pauncefoot was Dean of the Corps, and therefore Lady Pauncefoot and the Hon. Misses Pauncefoot outranked her. The French Ambassador was also married, and therefore Madame Cambon, when she came to be in this country, was entitled to outrank her. From the German Embassy, at that time presided over by the bachelor von Holleben, there was naught to fear.

But if she could not outrank the English and the French Ambassadors' wives she was assuredly, as mistress of the Russian Embassy, entitled to outrank the wife of every Minister Plenipotentiary in the Corps. And having taken

this stand the Countess held tenaciously to it.

It was during the McKinley administration, and the vital contest was to be fought out at the White House dinner to the Diplomatic Corps, which was twice postponed and finally abandoned owing to the illness of Mrs. McKinley on the date set for the splendid function.

But at the outset of the season, the Ministers of the Corps having appealed to the Ambassadors against allowing the young unmarried niece of the Russian Ambassador to outrank their wives, a meeting was called and suitable action taken. This was for the British Ambassador to give a dinner party, to be followed by such entertaining by the French and German Ambassadors. At each of these dinners it was agreed the young Countess should be a guest, but the place assigned her at table was to be below every Minister's wife present. These dinners were given and the Russian Ambassador's niece ac-

cepted the situation and bided her time. The diplomatic dinner at the White House having been abandoned, the following early summer the Cassinis went abroad.

Away over in Russia Ambassador Cassini formally drew up papers of legal adoption of his young niece, upon whom the Czar thereupon bestowed the hereditary title of Countess. And in deciding this honor the Czar and his Ambassador to America conferred long and earnestly upon many things.

It might have been noted that gradually one after the other, before the summer waned, each of those five Ministers who had gone to the White House on their errand of protest against Countess Cassini, were quietly eliminated from the Washington landscape and transferred to far distant posts. All of which only goes to show, of course, that when the diplomacy of a Czar is invoked, the foreign offices

of Continental Europe are like chessmen in the great game the mailed hand of Russia knows so well how at times to play.

Had they known its real import, however, the excitement in the corps would verily have been something unprecedented, for when Count Cassini, crossing the threshold of the White House, bowed courteously and shook the hand of the President, it was not only as representing in person the Czar, but it was, what was of infinitely greater import, as the bearer in person of an unofficial official message from that Czar. A message to the effect that the Czar, having conferred upon his Ambassador's legally adopted daughter the title and honors of Countess, the President of the United States would confer a highly appreciated courtesy in granting to that young Countess upon state occasions, all official position and honors which as mistress of the embassy and daughter of the Ambassador should now by right be hers.



WARREN



Countess Cassini

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